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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2008

In Today's Papers

Deliberation of AKP Closure Case Starts on July 28
All papers report that the Constitutional Court will begin deliberation on the AKP closure case July 28th. Mainstream Milliyet reports that the Constitutional Court President Hasim Kilic said it is not possible to give a date for the final decision, however, as always, when a decision is reached, they will inform the media. Milliyet observes that the AKP case has advanced much quicker than previous closure cases. The AKP case looks to conclude after only 4.5 months, whereas the Welfare Party (RP) case reached that stage at 8 months, and the Virtue Party (FP) in just over two years. Sabah says that the experts think the closure case may be concluded on August 1, or August 8 at the latest. Islamist- oriented Zaman reports that the Constitutional Court members are scheduled to go to Russia on August 12, but the Court President Hasim Kilic said that "national problems have top priority, therefore, if necessary, the trip to Russia could be cancelled." Mainstream Hurriyet says the suit will overshadow the High Military Council (YAS) on August 1-4. Liberal Radikal says there would be no problems in the appointment of new army commanders even if the AKP is banned because the appointments also can be made by the President or by an acting PM.

High Tension at the Higher Education Board (YOK)
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet: Today's papers report that the list of candidates for new rectors submitted by YOK to President Gul, did not contain names of highest vote getters at the relevant universities. (Note: the traditional practice is for university faculties to vote on candidates to establish a list of finalist candidates and those then are forwarded by YOK to the President for final selections.) Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet notes that all candidates opposing the government were eliminated by YOK. President Gul will appoint rectors for 21 universities.

Istanbul Court Rejects the Trial of Istanbul Police Chief in Dink Murder Case
Sabah, Zaman, Radikal, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Bugun and others: The Istanbul Regional Administrative Court rejected a request to prosecute eight policemen, including Istanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah, for negligence in the Hrant Dink murder. Earlier

prosecution permission was granted for seven Istanbul police officials, but they appealed the decision to a higher court.

President Gul Will Launch the Construction of New Railroad to Georgia and Azerbaijan
Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that President Gul will go to Kars today to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway on July 24. Georgian President Saakashvili and Azerbaijan's president Aliyev also will join the ceremony.

Bosnian War Crimes Fugitive Arrested in Serbia. Today's major international story focuses on the welcome of the arrest of former Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic who is accused of war crimes and genocide including Europe's worst massacre since World War II. Coverage is largely straightforward, but more emphasis is on the arrest being "a key step" for the country's EU membership hopes. Mainstream Hurriyet writes in "EU Diet of Serbians," that "the arrest of the Bosnia and Srebrenica monster will make Serbians attractive for the EU." Liberal Radikal says former deputy Secretary of State Holbrooke described Karadzic as "the Osama Bin Laden of Europe, a real true architect of mass murder." The paper also highlights that Karadzic was captured "once the newly elected, pro-EU government changed the national police chief." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the headline "Last Stop of the Serbian Butcher," noting "Turkey and the EU welcome Karadzic's arrest." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes the arrest is "a significant step forward on the way to EU." Mainstream Vatan carries banner the headline "They Deliver the Butcher, They Join the

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EU." Mainstream Milliyet portrays Karadzic as "a poet, a psychiatrist and a war criminal."

EDITORIAL OPINION: Serbia/Karadzic

"They Captured Him, When They Really Wanted to"
Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet (7/23): "Despite a fugitive life in Serbia, for 13 years, Radovan Karadzic couldn't be found. In fact, there was no serious effort or desire to find him until now and the timing of his capture is rather meaningful. Until now, the allied forces did not really want to go after him because they feared possible attacks from Serbian nationalists. And the Belgrade administration was not enthusiastic to go after Karadzic due to the potential for civil war because even now, Karadzic is still a heroic figure for some Serbians. All of this helped the world's most wanted criminal enjoy a life in the middle of the capital city. The capture of Karadzic came after a new administration took in charge in Belgrade. It was the right timing in terms of both internal and international dynamics. President Tadic and his coalition government expressed a determination to capture Karadzic and acted on it. The new government wants integration with the EU and it was well aware of the fact that there wouldn't be any progress with the European Union unless Karadzic and Mladic were captured and brought to the justice."

"The Bus Which Will Take Belgrade to the EU"
Celil Sagir wrote in Islamist-leaning Zaman (7/23): "The capture of Karadzic in a public bus raises questions, particularly about timing. Serbia has been going through a power struggle between nationalist parties and a pro-Western bloc. When the pro-Western bloc won recent elections, one of their priority targets was EU accession for the country. Brussels and Belgrade signed a 'Partnership and Stability Agreement,' but the capture of Karadzic and Mladic was a pre-condition to implement the agreement. Interestingly enough, the capture was announced on the eve of the EU Foreign Ministerial meeting to discuss the Union's relations with Belgrade. Now, the EU's stance becomes very important. If Brussels finds Karadzic's capture good enough to move forward with Belgrade's EU accession, then the possibility of capturing Mladic will weaken. However, both Karadzic and Mladic must be tried so that Bosnians can find relief from their pain from genocide."

Roj TV in Trouble. News outlets report in a straightforward fashion

that Roj TV is in trouble for tax invasion. Liberal Radikal writes in "Roj TV in Trouble with Europe," that "the Finance Ministry of Belgium is planning to seize their assets to compensate for a 4 million Euro tax debt." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes "Roj TV is Stuck" saying "Belgium is after the Roj TV which was banned by Germany for being the PKK's propaganda mouthpiece." Mainstream Sabah carries the headline "Roj TV Stuck in Belgium," while Islamist-oriented Zaman writes "Belgium Starts Confiscation of Roj TV."

TV News:
NTV

Domestic News

- METU students and graduates stage protests against Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek because of the Mayor's demand that the university pay a heavy fine for illegally constructed buildings on the campus
- Civil activists stage protests against government plans to build a nuclear plant in Sinop
- Defense Industry Under Secretariat decides to start talks with German HDW and its British partner Marine Force International, to build six submarines for the Turkish Navy

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- Famous cinema and theater actress Suna Pekuysal passed away from cardiac failure. Pekuysal performed in more than 250 plays and nearly 100 movies
- Turkish Energy Company Calik Enerji will construct a power plant in Turkmenistan for 137 million Euros

International News

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas meets Israeli President Shimon Peres in Jerusalem
 - Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki tells Senator Obama that he hopes US troops will go home by the end of 2010
 - German Chancellor Angela Merkel offers Iraq help as it moves toward an increasingly federal system
- WILSON